

Moments *for* You

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Theme: I Am the Way



A BOLD CLAIM

Jesus often surprised people with His teachings. “Lose your life to save it.” “The first will be last.” “The meek will inherit the earth.” “Rejoice in persecution.” “Pray for your enemies.” “It’s better to give than to receive.” “Turn the other cheek.” These are revolutionary teachings.

But by far the most outrageous assertion that Jesus ever uttered is in John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” This claim irritates people like nothing else. It’s been called narrow-minded. It’s been called bigoted. It’s been called snobbish. Why is this claim so controversial?

You’ve probably heard people say “There may be distinctions between various world religions, but if you strip them down to their essentials, all religions fundamentally teach the same thing.” But there are significant differences between the world religions that cannot be reconciled. In fact, with this one assertion: “no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me,” Jesus boldly puts Christianity in a class by itself.

Every other religion is based on people doing things, struggling and striving to earn the good favor of God. But Jesus taught the opposite: He said that we’re all guilty of wrongdoing, and that nobody could do anything to merit Heaven.

Jesus also said that our wrongdoing separates us from our God because God is holy and perfect. Because God is a righteous judge who by His very nature must judge wrongdoing, our wrongdoing has to be paid for. Because He loves us, because

Jesus and God are for us and not against us, Jesus voluntarily offered Himself as our substitute to pay the penalty that we owe because of our wrongdoing. When we receive His sacrifice on our behalf, we become reunited with God forever.

There are other fundamental differences. For instance, Christianity says that there is one eternal God who created the universe. But Hinduism says that everything is god; you are god, I am god, this podium is god. Islam denies that Jesus was God and that Jesus died for our sins. All religions are not the same.

While other religious leaders can offer wise sayings and helpful advice and insights, only Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, is qualified to offer Himself as payment for our wrongdoing. No other religious leader even pretended to be able to do that. Theologian R. C. Sproul puts it this way, “Moses could mediate on the Law. Mohammed could brandish a sword. Buddha could give personal counsel. Confucius could offer wise sayings. But none of these men was qualified to offer an atonement for the sins of the world.” Jesus alone was qualified.

How do we know that Jesus was telling the truth? Jesus authenticated His claim of being God by living a perfect life, by embodying the attributes of God, and by fulfilling dozens of prophecies written hundreds of years before He came to this planet. Unlike other religious leaders, Jesus also authenticated who He was by performing great miracles in broad daylight, in front of skeptics. He demonstrated His mastery over nature. He demonstrated His mastery over sickness. He

demonstrated His mastery over death by bringing Lazarus back to life after four days in a cold, damp tomb. In the most spectacular demonstration of His deity, Jesus fulfilled His own prediction by being resurrected from the dead, in an historical event that was witnessed by more than 500 people and that sparked a spiritual revolution that has been unparalleled in the history of the world.

Christianity is not just a philosophy; it is a reality. Jesus didn't just claim that He is the one and only Son of God. He validated His claim with convincing evidence like nobody else in history.

—Lee Strobel, condensed

IS JESUS THE ONLY WAY?

Jesus is the only way to Heaven for several reasons. Jesus was “chosen of God” to be the Savior (1 Peter 2:4). Jesus is the only One to have come down from Heaven and returned there (John 3:13). He is the only person to have lived a perfect human life (Hebrews 4:15). He is the only sacrifice for sin (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 10:26). He alone fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17). He is the only man to have conquered death forever (Hebrews 2:14–15). He is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the only man whom God has “highly exalted” (Philippians 2:9).

Jesus spoke of Himself as the only way to Heaven in several places besides John 14:6. He presented Himself as the object of faith in Matthew 7:21–27. He said His words are life (John 6:63). He promised that those who believe in Him will have eternal life (John 3:14–15). He is the gate of the sheep (John 10:7), the bread of life (John 6:35), and the resurrection (John 11:25). No one else can rightly claim those titles.

The apostles' preaching focused on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Peter, speaking to the Sanhedrin, clearly proclaimed Jesus as the only way to Heaven: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Paul, speaking to the synagogue in Antioch, singled out Jesus as the Savior: “through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things” (Acts 13:38-39). John, writing to the church at large, specifies the name of Christ as the basis of our forgiveness: “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake” (1 John 2:12). No one but Jesus can forgive sin.

Eternal life in Heaven is made possible only through Christ. Jesus prayed, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3). To receive God's free gift of salvation, we must look to Jesus and Jesus alone. We must trust in Jesus' death on the cross as our payment for sin and in His resurrection. “The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Romans 3:22).

At one point in Jesus' ministry, many of the crowd were turning their backs on Him and leaving in hopes of finding another savior. Jesus asked the Twelve, “Will ye also go away?” Peter's reply is exactly right: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:67-69). May we all share Peter's faith that eternal life resides only in Jesus Christ.

—GotQuestions.org

IN, OUT, THROUGH

One of the great statements that Jesus made regarding Himself was “I am the way” (John 14:6). I realize that Jesus was making that statement in a specific connection, in response to a question from Thomas; but in light of who Jesus was and is, and in light of all that the Bible teaches us about Him, it is also legitimate to apply that statement in other connections as well. I want to emphasize three applications of Christ’s statement, “I am the way.”

JESUS IS THE WAY OUT

He is the way out of sin’s condemnation, bondage, and misery. In John 8:34 Jesus said, “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” Jesus was speaking there of the person whose life is dominated by sin—in other words, the person who has not been born again. Jesus was saying that such a person is a servant—literally, a slave—of sin. Not only is he bound for eternal Hell when this life is over, but in the “here and now” he is a captive of his sinful nature. But when he meets God’s two conditions set forth in Acts 20:21, “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,” he receives God’s gift of eternal life and is miraculously set free from that miserable captivity.

I have a friend who was once a drug addict, and also a pusher. His life was an absolute wreck. He tried and tried to kick his drug habit, but would go right back into the same old destructive lifestyle. For years he was under psychiatric care, but that didn’t work. He tried rehab, but to no avail. He made countless promises to himself, to family, and to friends that he would stop, but didn’t follow through. Nothing seemed to help.

Finally, in desperation, and with

tears, he fell on his face before God and said, “Please help me.” He asked Jesus to come into his life, and his testimony is that at that very moment he was set free from his drug habit. He’s been clean for almost nineteen years now, and is an outstanding man of God. No telling how many people he has personally led to Christ. He has found from personal experience the truth of what Jesus said in John 8:36: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” After having tried nearly everything else, he found Jesus to be the way out of his bondage.

JESUS IS THE WAY IN

In reference to God having delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, here’s what Moses said in Deuteronomy 6:23: “He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He sware unto our fathers.”

He brought the Hebrews *out* of their tragic life in Egypt that He might bring them *in* to the land of promise. In like manner, when you surrender your life to Him, Jesus brings you *out* of sin’s bondage and misery and He brings you *in* to a new life—a life with wonderful possibilities, and with power available to help you realize those possibilities.

When you surrender your life to Christ, He gives you a new destiny—a home in Heaven, rather than Hell. He also gives you a new sense of direction—a new set of “want to’s”—and He gives you a new dynamic in your life, namely the indwelling Holy Spirit, to motivate and energize you as you move in that new direction. That doesn’t mean that you’ll be perfect, by any stretch of the imagination—Jesus was the only perfect individual who ever walked the earth. But it does mean that when you truly repent and

commit your life in faith to Christ, He forgives your sins and cleans you up. He lifts your life to a new level, and starts you on a new path.

Many of us have entered into the “promised land” of the Christian life, but following that initial “invasion” we haven’t exercised the daily disciplines that are essential for acquiring more territory. We haven’t made the spiritual advances that God intends for us. We’ve been born again and have the assurance of Heaven, but we’re not enjoying the full measure of victory that could be ours down here.

And here’s the reason: while works have nothing to do with the new birth, spiritual growth is an altogether different matter. God, by His grace, enables us to gain a greater degree of spiritual victory in our daily lives only to the extent that we cooperate with Him by daily disciplining ourselves to pray, to study His word, to be faithful in attending church, using our talents to serve, and by sharing our faith with others. When you were converted, He brought you in ... but now let Him bring you further in.

JESUS IS THE WAY THROUGH

We who have received Christ as Savior are not exempt from life’s reverses and tribulations; we’re not spared from the disappointments, the heartaches, and the tears—but here’s the big difference: as believers, the Lord is with us in those trials. In Hebrews 13:5 the Lord says to believers, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” If you’re a Christian, you never walk alone.

Indeed, the author of Psalm 23:4 went so far as to say, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me.” Isaiah 41:10 assures us: “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will

strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee.” In Romans 8, after recounting a long litany of woes and troubles that can happen to a person in this life, Paul said in verse 37, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

Are you dealing with some difficulty that’s about to tear you apart? And you don’t see how you can possibly handle it? Turn your life totally over to Jesus Christ, and you’ll see that He is the way through. In John 16:33 Jesus said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

TOTAL SURRENDER

Jesus is the way out, the way in, and the way through. But He can only be all of that to us if we totally surrender ourselves to Him, and here’s the holdup in so many of our lives. We consider ourselves to have surrendered to Christ, when in reality we’re holding back in certain areas, and so long as that’s the case we’ll never have the degree of victory that God wants us to have. There’s an old spiritual which contains this oft-repeated refrain: “The Lord’s gotta have 100 percent; 99½ won’t do!”

—Paul E. Brown, condensed

**Without the way
there is no going;
Without the truth
there is no knowing;
Without the life
there is no living.**

—From *The Imitation of Christ* by
Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471)

THE WAY RESTORED

This world is a world of sin. This world's system is contrary to God, in opposition to God, and in opposition to truth, holiness, love, and life. This started in the Garden of Eden, when our father Adam fell. In Adam all died; in Adam sin and death passed upon all men; in Adam judgment and condemnation came upon all men (Romans 5:12).

When Adam sinned, he lost three things:

First of all: He lost life! God said: "If you eat of the forbidden tree you will die." Well, Adam didn't die physically, not right at that moment; he lived another 700 or 800 years but he died spiritually, he lost spiritual life.

Secondly: He lost the truth! He believed the devil's lies and refused God's truth and mankind has been doing that ever since. We lost the truth of God. We can't comprehend the truth of God. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Lastly: He lost the way to God. God put him out of the Garden and shut the door. He put a flaming sword so he couldn't get back to the tree of life and live on forever in the condition he was in.

In Adam, we lost "the way, the truth, and the life." In Christ, all three of those things are restored. In Adam we died, in Christ we are made alive. Christ is the truth of God and Christ is the way to God.

This is the heart of the gospel. Our Lord said, "I am the way." He didn't say, "I'll show you the way." He didn't say, "I'll make a way." Christ doesn't point to a way and say, "walk in it." He says, "I am the way."

Do you want life? "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not

the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). Jesus is our life.

Do you want wisdom? "Christ Jesus ... is made unto us wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:30). He is our wisdom.

Do you want righteousness? He is our righteousness with God. We are righteous in Him. We are holy in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Do you want peace? "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Christ is our peace.

Do you want hope? "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Our hope is found in Him.

He didn't point to a law, a doctrine, a tradition, or a ceremony—He said, pointing to Himself, "I am the way." I've got to be vitally in a living relationship, joined to the Son of God. Doctrine won't save. It may have value to live by, but theology itself is not enough to die by. Christ is the gospel. Christ is the way to God. He is salvation. Salvation is not a plan, and it's not a proposition—it's a person. I hope you know Him!

—Henry T. Mahan, condensed

THE WAY TO THE FATHER

If you come to know Jesus, He will bring you to know the Father. When I began my Christian life, my awareness of the One with whom I was dealing was that of the Lord Jesus. He filled my horizon. I remember how I loved the hymns which sang of the cross and of the work of Christ, and I loved to think about Him as the Savior, the One who redeems. But as I have lived as a Christian, gradually the Father has come into focus. More and more my thoughts are drawn to the Fatherhood of God, and I revel in the glory of that relationship, in the closeness of my sonship with the Father.

This is what Jesus says: He is the way to the Father. You know the Father through Him, for He is also the truth—as Paul puts it, “The truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21). All the knowledge of God for which we human beings hunger is revealed in the words of Jesus about the Father. He unveils the Father’s heart, what kind of a Father He is—His power and His wisdom and His love.

He is the life of the Father. That is a most amazing claim! The Father has given all life into His hands, that He may give it to whomsoever He will. This is Jesus’ claim recorded in the fifth chapter of John. Only those who come to the Father by the Son can receive life. Jesus also said that no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him (Matthew 11:27). This meets fully the need of man. He is the way, in order that the will of man may choose it; He is the truth, in order that the mind may comprehend it; He is the life, in order that the heart of man can experience it. Thus to know Christ involves the whole person and leads to the full expression and experience of the fullness of God.

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A PERSON IS THE PATH

The pilot of a military plane was forced to parachute into a jungle in southeast Asia. How could he possibly find his way out? A local man saw what had happened and came to the pilot’s rescue, slashing through the tangled underbrush. The frightened pilot cried out, “Where’s the road? Where’s the way out?” The rescuer shouted back, “No road! I’m the way! Follow me!” The pilot trusted

the man, who led him through the jungle to safety.

Some people have a difficult time accepting similar words spoken by the Lord Jesus. He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6). Critics call this teaching intolerant and divisive. But because the Son of God said it, and the word of God records it, it is true no matter how much it is challenged. Faith in Jesus is the only way to eternal fellowship with God.

The pathway to God is not found by following a creed, developing moral character, or attending church. It’s found by trusting Jesus to forgive our sin and reconcile us to the Father. When we open our hearts to the crucified and risen Savior, we are on the only pathway that will bring us home to God. —Vernon Grounds, *Our Daily Bread*

IS JESUS EXCLUSIVE?

I once saw Billy Graham’s daughter Anne Graham Lotz on a popular news talk program. The interviewer asked, “Are you one of those who believe that Jesus is exclusively the only way to Heaven?” He added, “You know how mad that makes people these days!” Without blinking she replied, “Jesus is not exclusive. He died so that *anyone* could come to Him for salvation.”

What a great response! Christianity is not an exclusive club limited to an elite few who fit the perfect profile. Everyone is welcome regardless of color, class, or clout.

The gospel of Christ is offensive to some, but it is the wonderful truth that God loves us enough to come and take care of our biggest problem—sin. And as long as sin is the problem, the world needs Jesus!

—Joe Stowell, *Our Daily Bread*

SHARING THE WAY

As our world grows smaller and we rub shoulders with people from different religious backgrounds, how do we explain what we believe in a way that they can understand?

DON'T BE AFRAID

Too often fear makes us defensive about our faith. Don't be afraid of someone who doesn't share your point of view. Don't be afraid of your Muslim co-worker or your Hindu neighbor. Don't be afraid to strike up a conversation with a student who has no religion whatsoever.

BE KIND AND LISTEN

Too many Christians fit the stereotype of being all mouth and no ears. We talk but we don't listen. Or we listen just to have an excuse to talk some more. It's not a sin to let someone else explain how they view the world. In fact, it's simple human kindness to show some interest in the backgrounds of other people. Close your mouth, open your ears, listen intently and prayerfully, and let God lead the conversation. Show yourself friendly and God will open doors that you could never open on your own.

KEEP YOUR COOL

Don't be surprised when people react negatively. And don't get angry. You can't argue a person into the Kingdom of God. And you can't insult them into believing in Jesus (2 Tim. 2:24-25). It helps to remember that those without Christ are spiritually blind (2 Cor. 4:4). Until their blindness is removed by the Holy Spirit, they will never "see" the truth. You might as well get angry with a blind person for not seeing the color green.

KNOW YOUR STUFF

Make sure you know what you believe. Don't just read the Bible. Study it. Learn it. Memorize it. Find out

what it teaches. Let the word of God be the firm foundation for your own life and also for your family. Many followers of other religions know more about what they believe than we do about what we believe. I think it is high time that we learned as much about Christianity as the Muslims know about Islam.

BE BOLD, BUT SMILE

It's right at this point that so many of us fail. When someone disagrees with us the joy of the Lord is replaced with the wrath of God on our countenance. No wonder some people don't want to talk to us. If people get angry, let it be because of the truth we preach, not because of our angry words. If they reject us, let it not be because we treated them rudely. If sinners reject Christ, let it be because they truly reject Him, and not because we lost our temper. Speaking the truth in love is always the best rule.

BE THE LIGHT

There is a tremendous spiritual hunger in our generation. That's why Islam is on the rise in America. That's why Eastern religions attract so many people. The incredible religious diversity testifies to the hunger inside every heart. We were made to know God, and if we do not fill the "God-shaped vacuum" with the truth, we will fill it with whatever substitute we can find.

The very fact that we live in such spiritual darkness means that when the light shines, it really shines. Let us not be discouraged by the difficulty of the task. Let us instead be encouraged by the opportunities of this hour. The people of this generation are eating at the devil's trough when they could be feasting at the Father's table. Let us go out from here into the highways and hedges and in Jesus' name invite them to the banquet that never ends. —Ray Pritchard, condensed